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Patience helps Bridgman get edge on Bobcats

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL
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Right: Brandywine's DJ Elrod goes for a shot while being blocked by Bridgman player Dan Kunde.

BRIDGMAN -- By being extra patient on offense, Brandywine hoped that a running clock would be a benefit in Monday's Class C opening round district boys basketball game against No. 4-ranked Bridgman.

Instead, the running clock came into affect for another reason as the Bees rolled to a 71-26 win over the Bobcats.

Bridgman (20-1) advances to play Watervliet (8-12) in a district semifinal game Wednesday night at 7:30. The two teams didn't meet during the regular season.



For the first 11 minutes, Brandywine executed its ball control offense and trailed Bridgman, 12-8. The Bobcats were trying some new strategy after losing to the Bees twice by big margins (69-45 and 60-38) during the regular season.

"They held the ball and ran their weave out front to slow the tempo," said Bridgman coach Mike Miller. "I thought it was a good coaching move."

Brandywine's offensive game plan began to unravel in the second quarter with Bobcat turnovers giving Bridgman extra possession. Brandywine finished the game with 24 turnovers.

The Bees went on a 24-5 run to close out the first half to take a commanding 36-13 lead at halftime.

"Last night, we practiced specifically for (Brandywine's offensive game plan)," Miller said. "I thought we really did a nice job of defending that. A lot of times you can become impatient defensively and take too many gambles and give up too many fouls and layups and we didn't do that."

Bridgman got help from a surprising source. Bees point guard Todd Hendricks, not usually a high scorer, scored all 12 of his season-high points in the first half.

The 24-5 run began with Hendricks scoring on a rebound basket. The 5-foot-9 junior scored the Bees' next basket on a 3-pointer and set up Bridgman's next field goal after coming up with a steal and dishing an assist to Zach Welsher.

"I thought Todd Hendricks played an outstanding first half and really set the tone for us," Miller said.

Bridgman's lead continued to grow in the second half and a running clock started when the Bees took a 62-21 lead with 6:16 left in the game.

Bridgman, which had all reserves on the floor in the fourth quarter, had 12 different players score. **Dan Kunde had 11 points and six rebounds.** Dan Ponegalek added nine points.

"That was very nice," Miller said.

"Our game plan was to run a four-corner offense, attack and try to get some layups," said Brandywine coach Nathan Knapp. "We stalled too much instead of attacking and missed a lot of layups at the beginning of the game."

BRANDYWINE (26): Caleb Frazier 3 0-0 6, Bill Bussey 1 1-2 4, Kyle Low 0-0 0, Matt Beaver 1 1-2 3, Matt Wieger 1 0-1 3, D.J. Elrod 0 3-4 3, Billy McDonald 0 0-0 0, Adam Prescott 0 1-3 1, Chris Casey 0 2-2 2, Kevin Curran 0 0-0 0, Ryan Hartman 0 0-1 0, Justin Ely 1 1-2 4, Danny Williams 0 0-0 0, Cory Barber 0 0-0 0, Cody Smith 0 0-0 0. TOTALS: 7 9-17 26.

BRIDGMAN (71): **Dan Kunde 4 2-3 11**, Nick Sweet 3 0-0 7, Craig McNees 1 0-0 2, Dan Ponegalek 4 0-1 9, Todd Hendricks 5 0-0 12, Zac Nemitz 3 0-0 8, Zach Welsher 2 1-2 6, Jon Malm 1 3-4 6, Seth Coffing 1 0-1 2, Boo Ott 1 2-2 5, Pat Kading 0 0-0 0, Blake Ivers 0 1-2 1, Casey Berli 1 0-1 2. TOTALS: 26 9-16 71.

Brandywine	4	13	19	26
Bridgman	10	36	54	71

3-point goals: Brandywine 3 (Bussey, Wieger, Ely), Bridgman 10 (Hendricks 2, Nemitz 2, Kunde, Sweet, Ponegalek, Welsher, Malm, Ott). Total fouls (fouled out): Brandywine 16 (none), Bridgman 19 (none). Shooting: Brandywine 7-of-27 for 26 percent, Bridgman 26-of-48 for 54 percent. **Rebounding:** Brandywine 16 (Frazier, Low, Elrod 3 each), Bridgman 31 (**Kunde 6**). Turnovers: Brandywine 24, Bridgman 13. Officials: Dave Turley, Dave Sprague, Mike Hinga.

CLASS C Districts at Bridgman

No. 4 Bridgman speeds up the game Lakeland champs easily defeat Brandywine

By DARREN PHILLIPS
H-PSports Writer

BRIDGMAN — Brandywine began Monday's Class C district game against Bridgman running a slow-down offense, holding the ball and taking time off the clock. The strategy worked — but not for long.

Bridgman led 10-4 after one period and then blew the game open after forcing the tempo with an aggressive pressing and trapping defense. Bridgman outscored Brandywine 26-9 in the second quarter and went on to win 71-26. The final 6:16 was played with a running clock due to the mercy rule which kicks in when the lead hits 40. "They held the ball and ran the weave out front, which I thought was a good coaching move," said Bridgman coach Mike Miller. "We practiced specifically against that last night and I thought we defended it well." Fourth-ranked Bridgman (20- 1) advances to face Watervliet (8-12) in a 7:30 p.m. Wednesday semifinal.

Brandywine (4-17) cut into Bridgman's lead early in the second quarter, as a 3-pointer by Bill Bussey made it 12-8. Bridgman answered with a rebound basket and a 3-pointer by Todd Hendricks and the lead kept growing from there. Hendricks, the Bees' point guard not usually noted for his scoring, led the way with 12 points, all in the first half. Hendricks scored in double figures only twice during the regular season, with the 12 points matching his season high set in the Bees' opener against South Haven. He added four steals and three assists.

Hendricks' rebound basket started a stretch where the Bees scored on 11 of 14 possessions. Brandywine, meanwhile, had seven turnovers in the quarter and missed its last four shots from the field as the Bees took a 36-13 halftime lead. "I thought our diamond press in the second quarter really helped us," Miller said. "Our press has been off and on this year but it did well tonight." Brandywine scored the first five points of the third quarter but Bridgman got the next 11 and pushed the lead past 30 on a Nick Sweet 3-pointer.

The lead continued to grow in the fourth quarter even as Miller emptied the bench. No starters played in the fourth quarter and first sub Zac Nemitz left after less than two minutes.

A 3-pointer by Jon Malm with 6:16 to go made it 62-21 and started the running clock.

The Bees used 13 players and 12 of them scored. Bridgman was 26 of 49 from the field, including 10 of 22 on 3-pointers. **Dan Kunde scored 11 points** to support Hendricks' output. Brandywine, which hit just 7 of 31 shots, was led by Caleb Frazier with six points. Brandywine coach Nate Knapp declined comment after the game.